

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 2-8 in light of certain informalities in claims 2, 3, and 5; and rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,626,482 to Chan et al. (hereinafter, "Chan").

By this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims 2, 5, and 6, amended claims 1, 3, 7, and 8, and added new claims 9-13. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-13 are currently pending.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "non-elastic metallic engaging position provided in said first connector section." (Emphasis added). Support for Applicants' changes to claim 1 may be found, for example, in Applicants' specification at pg. 8, line 27 through pg. 9, line 16 and Fig. 2A.

The Objections to Claims 3, 4, 7, and 8 Should be Withdrawn

Applicants have amended claims 3, 7, and 8 in order to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner. Claims 2, 5, and 6 have been canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objection to claims 2-8.

The Rejection to Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Should be Withdrawn

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chan.

Anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102 requires that each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. If the prior art reference does not expressly set forth a particular element of the claim, that reference still may anticipate if that element is inherent in its disclosure.

To establish inherency, the Office must show that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference, and that it would be so recognized by persons of ordinary skill. (See M.P.E.P § 2131 (8th ed. 2001)).

Claim 1 is not anticipated by Chan because the reference fails to teach each and every element of the claim. In particular, Chan at least fails to teach “non-elastic engaging portions provided in the first connector section,” as recited in claim 1.

Chan discloses a “low profile electrical connector assembly [including] a plug and receptacle connectors”. Chan, Abstract. The connector assembly includes complementary interengaging holding members near the opposite ends of the connector housing for holding the connectors in [a] mated condition.” Chan, col. 2, ll. 39-42. “The holding members are metal spring members [having] cantilever springs arms facing toward one another upon mating of the connector housings.” Chan, col. 2, ll. 42-46. The Examiner alleges that the holding members 82 and 88, correspond to the claimed metallic engaging portions in the first connector section and metallic portions in the second connector section, respectively, as recited in claim 1. See Office Action, pg. 3. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Chan's holding members 82 and 88 are both cantilevers, and are, therefore, movable back and forth with respect to each other in order to engage one another. In contrast, claim 1 recites “non-elastic engaging portions provided in the first connector section.” Since the holding members 82 or 88 of Chan are movable, neither corresponds to the claimed “non-elastic engaging portions provided in said first connector section,” as recited by claim 1. Therefore, Chan does not disclose, either expressly or inherently, each and every element of claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 1. Moreover, claims 3, 4, 7, and 8 are allowable over Chan at least due to their dependence from claim 1.

Claims 9-13

New claims 9-13, while of a different scope, recite limitations similar to those recited in claim 1. For example, claims 9 and 10 recite a "non-elastic engaging portion" and claim 11 recites a "non-elastic metallic holding fixture." Claims 9-11 are therefore allowable over Chan at least for reasons discussed above in regard to claim 1. Further, claims 12 and 13 are allowable at least due to their dependence from claims 9 and 11, respectively.

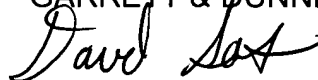
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.



Dated: October 27, 2004

By: Reg. No. 34,731
for John M. Romary
Reg. No. 26,331